Message Text

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USDOC FOR BEWT AND OEA

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ESTC ETRD RO

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

SUBJECT: EXPORT LICENSES FOR ROMANIA

REF: SOFIA 1145

- 1. EMBASSY BUCHAREST RECEIVED REFTEL, DESCRIBING BULGARIAN CHAFING AT DELAYED RESPONSE TO EXPORT LICENSE APPLICATIONS, SIMULTANEOUSLY WITH URGENT REQUEST FROM ROMANAIN FOREIGN TRADE COMPANY ELECTRONUM FOR STATUS REPORT ON EXPORT LICENSE APPLICATION. WE OFTEN RECEIVE SUCH REQUESTS, PARTICULARLY FROM ELECTRONUM AND TEHNOIMPORT, WHO POLITELY BUT INSISTENTLY PRESS EMBASSY FOR INFORMATION WHEN THEIR OWN EFFORTS HAVE FAILED. IN GENERAL WE FEEL REQUESTS ARE JUSTIFIED AND WOULD LIKE TO BE HELPFUL. ITEMS IN QUESTION ARE USUALLY KEY COMPONENTS OF LARGER PRODUCTION PROCESSES, AND PLANT MANAGERS UNDERSTANDABLY NEED TO KNOW IF AND WHEN EQUIPMENT WILL BE AVAILABLE SO AS TO INTELLIGENTLY PLAN PRODUCTION SCHEDULES.
- 2. IN HIGHLY CENTRALIZED ROMANIAN ECONOMY, EMPLOYEES OF FOREIGN TRADE COMPANY ARRANGING IMPORT OF EQUIPMENT SHARE RESPONSIBILITY FOR SUCCESSFUL OPERATION CONFIDENTIAL

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OF PLANT FOR WHICH EQUIPMENT IS IMPORTED, OFTEN FOR

PERIOD OF UP TO ONE YEAR AFTER EQUIPMENT IS DELIVERED. IMPORTING OFFICER IS THEREFORE UNDER PRESSURE TO SEE THAT DELIVERIES ARE MADE PROMPTLY. HE WILL BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE IF HE ORDERS EQUIPMENT THAT CANNOT BE DELIVERED, FOR WHATEVER REASON, THEREBY DISRUPTING PRODUCTION PLANS. IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, KNOWLEDGE THAT FINAL DECISION ON US EXPORT LICENSE MAY BE DELAYED FOR UNSPECIFIED PERIOD MAKES ROMANIAN IMPORTERS RELUCTANT TO RISK ORDERING AMERICAN EQUIPMENT REQUIRING SUCH LICENSE.

- 3. IN ELECTRONICS FIELD, ROMANIA CLEARLY REGARDS US AS WORLD LEADER AND, SINCE ELECTRONICS SECTOR IS ONE OF FASTEST GROWING IN ROMANIAN ECONOMY, ROMANIA COULD BECOME SIGNIFICANT PURCHASER OF US PRODUCTS AND TECHNOLOGY. WHILE FURTHER LIBERALIZATION OF LICENSING CONDITIONS CAN OF COURSE BE EXPECTED TO YIELD DESIR-ABLE RESULT OF INCREASED SALES TO ROMANIA, SPEEDING UP OF DECISION PROCESS COULD ALSO HAVE SIMILAR EFFECT. ROMANIANS HAVE MORE THAN ONCE TOLD US THAT WHILE THEY WOULD OF COURSE PREFER A FAVORABLE ANSWER ON LICENSE APPLICATIONS, EVEN A QUICK NEGATIVE ANSWER WOULD BE BETTER FROM THEIR POINT OF VIEW THAN DELAYED RESPONSE. REMOVAL OF ELEMENT OF UNPREDICT-ABILITY FROM LICENSING PROCEDURE WOULD MAKE ROMANIANS LESS LIKELY TO AVOID PRODUCTION PROCESSES FOR WHICH US IS ONLY SOURCE OF EQUIPMENT OR TECHNOLOGY. IN-CREASED US SALES SHOULD RESULT.
- 4. REQUEST FOR STATUS REPORT ON EXPORT LICENSE FOR AUTOMATIC SCRIBING MACHINE FOR ELECTRONUM BEING SENT SEPTEL.
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